

Alaska Monthly Fire Potential Outlook



Forecast:

- Normal fire potential is expected in Alaska for the remainder of the winter. Normal fire potential will likely continue through spring and early summer.

Factors:

- The winter's snowfall has not been particularly heavy across Alaska, and while the US Drought Monitor shows no areas of Alaska in drought status, much of the Interior and Northwest Alaska are categorized as "abnormally dry" as of late February.
- The Climate Prediction Center's forecast through the remainder of the winter and into early summer calls for drier and cooler than normal conditions likely over South Central Alaska and the Panhandle, while wetter and warmer weather is expected over Northwest Alaska. The current La Niña global weather pattern, which typically brings drier winters to southern Alaska, is expected to weaken by summer.
- Fuels are snow-covered and frozen. The spring melt cycle and the amount of snow that falls between now and early April will determine spring fuel conditions.



The first wildfires of the season typically begin in April along population corridors as wind-driven grass fires at lower elevations. By May wildfires become possible at higher elevations with the continued melting of the snowpack, and thunderstorms become a factor in ignitions. The deeper fuels typically dry and contribute to wildfire behavior in June.